

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend claims 1, 2, 7 and 8 as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A burner mechanism for a rotary kiln for the production of cement clinker from raw meal having an axially movable burner lance which extends through a stationary kiln outlet housing into an end of the rotary kiln comprising:

a replaceable burner protection shield extending through the stationary kiln outlet housing, located at a distance spaced below the burner lance in the stationary kiln outlet housing and extending less than fully around said burner lance.

2. (Currently amended) A burner mechanism for a rotary kiln for the production of cement clinker from raw meal having an axially movable burner lance which extends through a stationary kiln outlet housing into an end of the rotary kiln comprising:

a replaceable burner protection shield located at a distance spaced below the burner lance, [The burner mechanism according to claim 1,] wherein the burner protection shield is movable parallel to the burner lance by means of its own carriage.

3. (Original) The burner mechanism according to claim 1, wherein a width of the burner protection shield is greater than a diameter of the burner lance.

4. (Original) The burner mechanism according to claim 1, wherein the burner protection shield includes at least one cooling channel for passage of a cooling media.

5. (Original) The burner mechanism according to claim 1, wherein the burner protection shield is comprised of a heat resistant material.

6. (Original) The burner mechanism according to claim 4, wherein the cooling channel is arranged so that the cooling media is discharged from the burner protection shield into an area other than into the rotary kiln.

7. (Currently amended) A burner mechanism for a rotary kiln comprising:  
an axially extending burner lance which extends through a stationary kiln outlet housing into an end of the rotary kiln, and  
a replaceable burner protection shield extending through the stationary kiln outlet housing and positioned substantially parallel to and at a distance below the burner lance in the stationary kiln outlet housing.

8. (Currently amended) A burner mechanism for a rotary kiln comprising:  
an axially extending burner lance which extends through a stationary kiln outlet housing into an end of the rotary kiln, and  
a replaceable burner protection shield positioned substantially parallel to and at a distance below the burner lance, [The burner mechanism according to claim 7,] wherein the burner protection shield is movable parallel to the burner lance by means of its own carriage.

9. (Original) The burner mechanism according to claim 7, wherein a width of the burner protection shield is greater than a diameter of the burner lance.

10. (Original) The burner mechanism according to claim 7, wherein the burner protection shield includes at least one cooling channel for passage of a cooling media.

11. (Original) The burner mechanism according to claim 7, wherein the burner protection shield is comprised of a heat resistant material.

12. (Original) The burner mechanism according to claim 10, wherein the cooling channel is arranged so that the cooling media is discharged from the burner protection shield into an area other than into the rotary kiln.